



Covid-19 and bio-assaults



lack of Covid-19 tests and of a chain of evidence. The prevalence of the virus makes everyone a potential threat. Moreover, such attacks can have lethal consequences for the victim and/or everyone in close proximity to the victim. The measure – actual bodily harm – from such attacks is up for debate. Policy makers have been urging sentencing reappraisal for battery on key workers. However, Covid-19 assaults may require legal reconceptualization to reflect the gravity of the intended and actual harm from these attacks.

Some ideas in response

- ◁ Define the Covid-19 coughs as *bio assault* or *bio violence* and develop clear guidance on reporting and sentencing.
- ◁ As lockdown is relaxed, police should be alert to such bio and hate crimes in locations where

This is one of a series of short, speculative papers developed by the UCL Jill Dando Institute during the current pandemic. It is edited by Nick Tilley and Gloria Laycock and published by University College London. The raison d'être of the series is fully described at: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/jill-dando-institute/research/covid-19-special-papers>